

Without Struggle by [iconicprince](#)

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Alternate Universe - High School, Alternate Universe - No Pennywise (IT), Alternate Universe - Werewolf, Angst, Angst with a Happy Ending, Beverly Marsh Lives With Her Aunt, Bill Denbrough & Eddie Kaspbrak Are Best Friends, Bisexual Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak Loves Richie Tozier, F/M, Gay Eddie Kaspbrak, M/M, Oblivious Richie Tozier, Richie Tozier & Stanley Uris Are Best Friends, Richie Tozier Has ADHD, Richie Tozier Loves Eddie Kaspbrak, Slow Burn, Supernatural Hunters, Werewolf Hunters, Werewolf Richie Tozier

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Georgie Denbrough, Henry Bowers, Maggie Tozier, Mike Hanlon, Mr. Chips (IT), Patrick Hockstetter, Reginald "Belch" Huggins, Richie Tozier, Sonia Kaspbrak, Stanley Uris, The Losers Club (IT), Victor Criss, Wentworth Tozier

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Beverly Marsh & Richie Tozier, Bill Denbrough & Eddie Kaspbrak, Bill Denbrough & Richie Tozier, Bill Denbrough/Mike Hanlon, Eddie Kaspbrak & Beverly Marsh, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Richie Tozier & Stanley Uris

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Summary:

After a nearly lethal encounter with a monstrous wolf, Richie starts experiencing changes in himself. He struggles to balance life, love, school, and being a teenage werewolf.

1. Of Despondent Teens and Emaciated Wolves

Summary for the Chapter:

The sky was no longer an orange hue, trading in warm tones for navy and black. The sun had certainly made its way past the horizon by now, and Richie took that as his cue to finally leave. He readjusted his glasses and started the trek through the woods.

He'd only walked several feet before he heard a twig snap in the brush beside him. In a moment of realization, he noticed the only thing he could hear were his own steps on the crunching leaves. It was just past sunset, yet no birds were singing, no crickets chirping. Even the trees had silenced, as though the forest itself were waiting in anticipation.

October 28th, 1993

Richie

After a long afternoon in the barrens, enjoying the cool weather and colorful trees, the losers club decided to head home. Richie waved at the retreating forms of his friends, and kicked a rock from the path that led to the road. He didn't want to go home, not yet. He was still brimming with energy but had no outlet.

Sitting on a fallen tree, he stretched out his legs and looked up at the patches of light filtering through the forest canopy. The golden rays of sunset accentuated the warm hues of the autumn leaves. Snow would soon cover the ground, and wouldn't leave until the next spring, so he allowed himself to soak up the few rays he could before the cold Maine winter took hold of Derry and its citizens.

He sighed, searching his pockets for his lighter, and with practiced elegance, brought a cigarette to life. He found himself slowly relaxing, the rhythm of his breathing and the nicotine entering his system working in tandem to reduce his anxieties. The boy seldom

allowed himself to be quiet, his thoughts too great and loud for his head. On occasion though, he would find himself able to calm his mind, typically with some form of narcotic assistance. He assumed this must be how normal people function, and why his mouth always seemed to get him into trouble.

A bird loudly screeching interrupted his reverie. He frustratedly stood, watching above for any indication of what the cause for commotion was, but the only sign of disturbance was a singular leaf fluttering to the ground. The sky was no longer an orange hue, trading in warm tones for navy and black. The sun had certainly made its way past the horizon by now, and Richie took that as his cue to finally leave. He readjusted his glasses and started the trek through the woods.

He'd only walked several feet before he heard a twig snap in the brush beside him. In a moment of realization, he noticed the only thing he could hear were his own steps on the crunching leaves. It was just past sunset, yet no birds were singing, no crickets chirping. Even the trees had silenced, as though the forest itself were waiting in anticipation. This sudden awareness of the abnormal quiet crept up Richie's back and settled in his throat. He tried to swallow down the discomfort, but it was stuck.

Letting his paranoia win, he began to walk faster, willing himself out of the forest; if he wished hard enough, maybe the road would suddenly appear before him, even though he was still half a mile out. Night made the woods seem foreboding when only hours prior had been welcoming and friendly. His mind began to race, scenarios filling every empty space in his brain until he was shaking from panic. He was brought out of his thoughts when the trees around him shook with a growl. Richie slowly turned to find the source of the sound, but when he met the golden eyes of the beast, his blood ran cold.

A grey wolf stood only several feet away. It's lips were curled back in a snarl, ears flat against its head. The animal was massive, the same size as Richie, if not larger. It bowed its head and raised its shoulders, fur bristled. Time passed slowly, and neither moved. The creature was thin, all of its ribs stuck out, even through the thick coat of fur. Every aspect of the wolf highlighted its hunger. He knew humans

were rarely ever prey to wolves, but this one seemed desperate enough.

The creature pounced, and before Richie could think, he was running. Adrenaline rushed through his system, propelling him forward in an attempt to survive. He barely registered the pain that bloomed in his left calf, continuing forward into a thicker patch of the barrens. Branches scratched his face and hands, and he kept tripping on stray rocks and felled limbs. Another bite at his leg caused him to fully tumble, his hands coming up to protect his face. He scrambled to get back up but stumbled, landing on his back.

Richie was quickly pinned under the creature, and he could see its teeth, shiny and malicious. Blood, his own, dripped from its muzzle onto his tattered shirt. He pushed the wolf, but it didn't move. He struggled to get away, but he was too weak to escape the beast.

He cried out when it bit down on his side. Hot tears trailed down his face as he thought of his friends and family. Would they mourn him? Would they even find his body? If they did, would he even be recognizable? He let out a quiet sob at the thought of one of his friends coming across his remains, bones strewn about. He could clearly see all of his friends' faces. He wished he'd told them that he loved them. How much they meant. He'd never get to tell Eddie how he felt.

He was so lost in his thoughts, he almost didn't notice when the creature had released his flesh from its jaws. Though his vision was blurred with tears, he could see it move. The wolf tilted its head back and let out a long and sad howl. When it finished, there was a pause, as it waited for a response, but thankfully for Richie, none came. The wolf sniffed at the air, then Richie, and suddenly shrunk back. In confusion and relief, he watched as the creature took off back from where it had come.

Not wasting the opportunity, he got back up and ran until he came upon one of Derry's many backroads. He quickly stumbled onto his bike, taking a shuddering breath before getting on. Tears continued to slip off his cheeks, the thrill of survival mingling with the remainder of his terror. The pain barely registered as he peddled, clutching his side in a feeble attempt to slow the worst of the

bleeding.

At a fork in the road, he made the decision to go home. None of his injuries were *too* deep. He'd been through worse. He felt nauseous thinking about going to the hospital. Having to explain why he was out late where he was. The hospital staff not believing him. His parents' disappointment. The financial problems they were already dealing with.

I can take care of this myself. He convinced himself, taking the shortest route home.

Several minutes later he was in his driveway. He acknowledged that only his mother's car was parked in the garage as he put his bike away and limped into his home. He immediately made his way to the upstairs bathroom, peeling off his bloodstained clothes and tossing them into the bathtub. He gingerly set his glasses on the sink, then stepped into the shower. He turned it on, and warmed himself up with the gentle spray. Using the mirror, he assessed his wounds. Scrapes and scratches covered his face and hands. Both of his calves were coated in blood. The water stung as he cleaned out the injuries. With the blood gone, they looked far less intimidating.

The bite on his right side was deep, though, and hadn't slowed in bleeding. The water that ran past his feet was tinged pink, and he felt a small wave of nausea. He quickly rinsed his hair of grime, sweat, and blood, before getting out and drying off. The cabinet under the sink held a large first aid kit, complete with gauze, tape, and band-aids. In only minutes, all the major wounds were covered. He then turned back to the shower, scrubbing his clothing harshly to avoid staining.

He deemed his work sufficient enough when his arms grew tired, and shut off the shower, then placed the sopping garments into his hamper. He put on a fresh set of pajamas, then slowly made his way downstairs to the laundry room. He dumped everything into the empty washer and started a quick cycle. He limped out to the kitchen and found a note on the counter that read

"Richie,

Out for dinner, leftovers in fridge

Mom xo”

He heated a helping of lasagna, and by the time he had finished, the washer loudly beeped. The clothes appeared unblemished, but his t-shirt was in tatters, so he put it in a plastic bag, then threw it away. Everything else went into the dryer. Then he turned off all the lights and carefully made his way back upstairs, collapsing into bed and falling asleep quickly.

Notes for the Chapter:

This is my first fic I've written since I was in middle school, so bear with me as I get used to the format of AO3 and getting back into the process of creative writing. This is super self-indulgent and vaguely inspired by the tv version of Teen Wolf. The werewolf mythology is mostly my own take based on all the content I've absorbed over the years, and I'll thoroughly explain what's up with that in a future chapter. I'm aiming for a bi-monthly update schedule, since I know my workload will pick up significantly next semester, and I'd like to be somewhat consistent. I have nearly the entire story outlined, just need to sort out the ending. Sorry-not-sorry that this first chapter is almost entirely a character analysis of Richie, and that he doesn't interact with anyone. Next chapter will be full of them. I wanted to get into Richie's current headspace and mental-state before shit hits the fan for him, since this is a world where they all became friends, but Pennywise didn't happen. Where Would Richie be by his senior year? How would he be coping with his queerness, his neurodivergence, etc. Hope you liked it!

2. Of Vehement Emotions and Moderate Deceit

Notes for the Chapter:

edit: I added some stuff to this chapter because I had to change my outline. If you read this prior to december 1 ill just detail what i added in the end notes

October 29th, 1993

Richie

He woke with a start, his alarm ripping him from a deep sleep. He stretched his sore body, then got up and went to the bathroom. He was uncomfortably warm, and covered in a thin layer of sweat. He groaned, removing his clothes gingerly, then starting the shower. He removed the bandages carefully to keep the tape from ripping his skin and hair. He set his glasses on the sink, then stepped into the shower.

Not wanting to irritate his skin with soap or a washcloth, he used only his hand and the water to wash the dried blood from his injuries. When he brought his hand away, he found that there wasn't any indication of the wounds. He rubbed his eyes, then put his glasses back on. With the clarity of his prescription, it was even more obvious that nothing was there.

He stepped out of the shower and quickly toweled himself off. He assessed his body; he was completely healed. The bruise that had painted his back and left side from when he'd been cornered by Bowers last week was gone. Even his acne had made itself scarce. Looking closely, he could see faint marks where he'd been bitten on his right side, but everything else appeared flawless. His muscles still ached, but seemed to be slowly letting up while he marveled at his unblemished skin.

"Richie! You're gonna be late!" his mother called from downstairs.

"I'll be down in a minute!" he hollered back. His face grew hot from

embarrassment at having stared at himself in the mirror for such a long time.

He hurried back to his room and picked out an outfit for the day. He wondered if last night had even happened, if he'd imagined the wolf. He didn't have much evidence to prove anything *had* happened, and with his reputation, it wasn't likely he'd be believed by anyone.

I'm *the boy who cried wolf*. He thought to himself, shouldering his backpack and tumbling downstairs. His mother was rushing around the kitchen, fully dressed but her hair still undone.

"Morning, sweetie, sleep well?"

"Yeah, I did." He prepared himself a bowl of cereal while he pondered his recent sleeping habits. Often, he'd be awake well into the night, and only sleep for a couple hours, if at all. Last night though, he'd crashed immediately.

Maybe I should get attacked by wild animals more often. He joked to himself. When he finished, he dumped his bowl into the sink, then left. Before shutting the door, he hollered out "Bye, Mom".

Bill's car was parked on the street. He could see that his friend was fiddling with the dial, trying to find something suitable to listen to. Richie grinned to himself, proud and ready to present his latest mixtape to Bill. Once he'd buckled himself in the passenger seat, he ripped open his backpack and offered the cassette to his friend. Bill's eyes sparkled, his mouth curving into a smile.

"Richie's Fave's, nuh-number five," He read, slotting the tape into the player. Bill had been going to a speech therapist for the last couple years, and his stutter was nearly gone. Only his friends would catch when he hovered on a syllable for a moment too long, or stumbled through a sentence quickly, trying to force the words out of his mouth.

A heavy guitar riff thundered through the speakers, Rush's "Stick It Out" playing. Bill gently bopped his head while driving, Richie played air guitar and made silly faces. By the time they pulled into the high school parking lot, the two were laughing, Richie having

headbanged particularly hard at a stop sign, his glasses askew.

They walked into the school, parting ways to attend their homerooms. The speaker system turned on and a student recited the pledge. During the announcements, some kind of interference screeched over the system. Richie clutched his ears, sensitive to the sound. The high-pitched ringing ended, but, looking around the classroom, he realized that no one else had been disturbed by the noise. He stared down at his desk, hiding his face from his peers.

His embarrassment was quickly forgotten, replaced by his anxieties about the previous night. He felt more fidgety than usual, dying for the bell to ring. He wanted to focus, the topics seemed intriguing, but his mind kept wandering. Whenever he closed his eyes he could see those teeth, clamping down on his weak form.

He could hear the obnoxious popping and chewing of gum. Looking up from his blank notes, he expected to see someone nearby making a show of annoyingly chomping on spearmint or bubblegum, but couldn't locate the culprit. After a moment of searching, he realized no one in the room had gum. Why would they? It wasn't allowed in class.

He shrugged it off.

By fourth period he was sweating, his body uncomfortably warm. He took off his sweater, tying it around his waist. The hallways were cooler than the stuffy classrooms, and he meandered until he reached the library. The large doors were propped open; even from several feet away, he could feel the stuffy air.

He had no clue what he was looking for, but he wanted answers. Ben was sitting in a bean-bag chair, his curious eyes scanning through a large book about Maine's wildlife.

"Haystack, what's up?"

"Morning. I'm good." Ben slowly looked up from his book, slight confusion on his face. "Why are you in the library?"

"What? Can't a guy be a Trashmouth *and* intelligent?" Richie kneeled

down to be eye-level with his friend.

Ben shrugged.

"I'm just doing a little... *personal* research" Richie looked away, scanning the shelves.

"Oh, that's not, like, *code* for something, is it?" Ben eyed Richie suspiciously.

"Oh, you wound me, Ben," He put on a Voice, throwing himself to the ground with a hand on his forehead. "I actually want to look up some stuff, I'm just not sure where to look."

"Oh! Do you want some help?" Ben stood quickly, now looking eager.

"Yes," Richie admitted, getting up as well. "I wanted to look into wolves."

"Why wolves?" Ben cocked his head to the side.

"I dunno, they're just, cool I guess," Richie lied.

"Ok," Ben turned, walking confidently toward a group of shelves. Richie followed, hovering behind Ben whenever he stopped to examine the individual titles. "I'd start here. You could also look stuff up with one of the computers. Maybe get one of the librarians to help?"

"Yeah, sure. Thanks, man." The librarians hated Richie, they definitely wouldn't help him.

Ben patted Richie's arm, then left. One look at all the books in front of him made Richie groan.

This is gonna take forever .

He pulled out several books that seemed promising, flipping through them quickly.

Canis lupus and it's subspecies are native to Europe, Asia, and North America. They are the largest of their genus and are highly

social creatures.

This one was alone , Richie knew. Why was it alone?

He flipped through, opening up to a new page.

Very few instances exist of non-rabid wolves attacking and killing people, due to their fear of humanity.

Just my luck .

He turned another several pages.

With large prey, the wolf will track and chase, aiming for the legs to weaken the animal.

When the prey is approximately the same size, the wolf will bite the throat, killing its prey almost instantly.

Why didn't it try to kill me?

He put the book back.

The bell rang, and he shook off his nerves, ready for lunch.

In the cafeteria, students were happily chatting of Halloween plans. Richie and his friends were no exception, eating and laughing at their table during lunch. The conversation paused for a moment, and Stan took the opportunity to state an observation.

“You seem different,” he said to Richie, an apple in his hand.

“Yeah,” Richie let out an exaggerated sigh, then leaned back in his chair. “That’s what a good lay does Stanny-boy, you should try it sometime.”

Stan blinked, then turned back to his apple. Richie knew from years of friendship that it was Stan’s way of saying ‘I know you’re hiding something, but I’m not going to bring it up in front of everyone else.’ Or maybe Richie was reading too much into his friends’ nonverbals.

After a moment, Bev spoke, “Mike told me that his grandfather is

letting us use the loft for Halloween.”

A round of cheers broke out from the five boys, which caught the attention of the lunch monitor, who glared in their direction until they quieted to their usual volume.

“Should we bring anything? Snacks, blankets?” Eddie questioned.

“He didn’t say, if you want to you can,” Beverly then got up to dispose of her tray. A glance at the clock revealed only several minutes remained.

Richie had spent so much time talking, he’d barely touched his meal. He finished the rest of his sandwich in two large bites, then shoveled pudding into his mouth. Eddie was making gagging noises from the other end of the table, making a show of how disgusting he found both the cafeteria food and Richie’s eating habits. It was nearly a daily occurrence, almost a routine, similar to everything else the two boys did when regarding each other.

Richie does something. Eddie complains. Richie says something in defence. Eddie pouts. There was comfort in their little act, as if they were secretly always performing for an audience, which, when it came to the other losers, sometimes were. But it persisted even when the two were completely alone, they couldn’t stop, couldn’t put their guard down, even for each other.

“That’s disgusting,” Eddie grimaced.

“Your mom doesn’t think so,” Richie said, his mouth full. Everyone at the table cringed to a degree, used to Richie’s antics, but still finding his comments distasteful.

The bell rang, and the entire lunch room erupted with the sound of teenagers gathering their things and saying goodbyes before hurrying off to class. Richie and Eddie paired up, having English 12 together. Their teacher was an older man with a southern drawl that tended to speak more to the board than the class. Richie didn’t mind, he could teach himself most of the material from the books alone. Eddie struggled with the teacher’s lack of teaching though, and often would ask for Richie’s help to understand. This led to both boys not really

paying attention in class by the second week of school. Their desks were pushed together in groups of four, and the two often would doodle silly things in their notebooks for each other. Their two other group members didn't seem to mind either, both semi-engrossed in the teacher's monotonous droning of the importance of symbolism and how to interpret colorful descriptions of mundane objects in the most elegant fashion.

Today, the boys were in an intense battle of tic-tac-toe, Eddie ahead by two points. Both their notebooks were covered in small iterations of the game, typically a draw, with the occasional win to "X", Richie, or "O", Eddie. Another draw caused a quiet sigh to escape Eddie.

"This is getting kinda boring," He whispered, glancing up at the board before pulling his notebook back to his desk and copying what the teacher had written on the board.

"Woah Spaghetti, I'm *more* boring than Jung *and* Freud?" Richie feigned an offended expression.

"Nah, just wanted to quit while I was winning," Eddie quipped, a small grin on his face.

"If anyone would like to review the material, I will be available to help after school today and Monday," Their teacher then turned to pass out papers with practice questions for their upcoming test on the collective unconscious. Everyone shoved their materials into their bags, and moments later, the bell rang.

Eddie brushed up against Richie on their way out of the classroom, the doorway barely allowing them both to fit through at the same time. Richie held his breath, his heart beating loudly in his chest.

"See ya later, Eds," Richie called as they parted in the hallway.

He headed to his study hall classroom to sign in with the staff member, but noticed there was a substitute. A particularly grumpy older woman with a frumpy green dress and a permanent scowl sat at the front of the nearly-empty classroom with a clipboard clasped in her chubby hands.

"Name?" the woman questioned without glancing up.

"Tozier," Richie said before turning to leave. A cough left the woman.

"Excuse me, young man, where do you think you're going?" She questioned, finally looking up.

"Oh, I was just gonna go to the art room 'cause I have art next period. Wanted to finish up my project," He lied. Usually Richie went out to smoke with Bev, *then* he would go to the art room.

The substitute's glare grew harsh. "No one leaves study hall."

"But I do it every-"

"I don't *care* if the usual monitor lets you galavant about the school. You will stay here for the entire period." She turned to the next student.

Richie wanted to argue, but knew it was a losing battle. With a huff, he slumped into a seat in the back of the classroom, away from everyone else, and stewed in his anger while pretending to work. He watched his knuckles turn white as he gripped a pencil. Without warning, it snapped. He stared at the splinters on his desk, surprised at his own strength. He shoved the pieces into his backpack and pulled out a new one, not wanting to be marked up for breaking something, even if it was something of his own.

As the period dragged on, his frustration grew. By the time the bell rang, he was stewing with anger, directed at the bitter substitute and from nicotine withdrawal. He knew little would be completed during art, but hoped he could at least calm down before the day ended.

It wasn't often he felt this angry. His skin was hot and his fingertips prickled. His tongue felt heavy in his mouth and his ears rang with every sound. Everything seemed to set him off as he maneuvered the school to the arts wing.

He took out his project and exhaled, trying to focus his attention. It was maddening, to not be in control. He felt like a child again. For several agonizingly long minutes he sat still, trying to get his breathing back to normal.

Someone opened the window and a breeze blew by, the scent of autumn now inside. It brought him out of his thoughts and instantly calmed him. Like the sun shining through heavy clouds, his anxieties parted and he settled into himself. He silently thanked that the school had messed up AC and Heating systems that caused this room to be so hot.

By the end of class, he'd actually completed his project and was able to hand it in. It was a charcoal still-life of a fake skull and plastic fruit. The art teacher smiled at him, quite proud of the improvements since the previous assignment, where Richie had paid far less attention and not put much effort into the project, resulting in a half-assed piece that didn't mean anything.

Richie packed up his things and ran out of the building, waiting by the sidewalk for his friends. Ben arrived first, talking quickly about invasive species in Derry and some other stuff that Richie wasn't quite paying attention to. Bill and Eddie came out next, followed by Stan and Bev.

Bill took Ben and Bev in his car, and Stan took Eddie and Richie in his father's car. Both vehicles moved south, away from the center of the town toward the wide open farms and fields. Half a mile from the Hanlon farm was a quaint diner that was almost always empty, perfect for a large group of teens to hang out at on a Friday afternoon.

Mike's truck was in the parking lot when they arrived, and he'd sat at their usual corner booth. One of the waitresses was flirting with him. He looked relieved when everyone else walked in.

Eddie and Richie childishly fought for the last booth seat, and the waitress left with everyone's drink orders but theirs. Richie almost had himself completely sat when Eddie stopped pulling. Richie accidentally shoved Stan, who glared pointedly.

"Sorry," Richie apologized sheepishly.

His victory wasn't celebrated for long, because Eddie was suddenly in Richies lap.

“Uh...” Richie’s voice cracked, he cleared his throat and tried again. “Hey Eds, what... um... what are you doing?”

Eddie scoffed, as if his reason for suddenly forcing himself into Richie’s personal space was obvious. “You weren’t going to give up, and neither was I. So I compromised.”

“This is a compromise?” Richie’s voice was strained. All of his friends were staring at them. Even some of the other patrons and staff were watching.

Richie pushed Eddie off, then took one of the regular chairs, abdicating his prized booth seat. He was now in between Beverly and Ben, which could be awkward, but sitting next to Eddie after *that* would be far worse. Mike cleared his throat, and Richie silently thanked him for drawing attention away.

“My grandfather told me that we can use the hayloft on Sunday, I already told Bev.”

Everyone nodded, varying responses of “Yeah, she told us today,” sprouting up from around the table.

“Okay, cool. I’m making snacks for us, by the way. You guys don’t need to bring anything,” Mike deliberately looked in Stan and Eddie’s direction, knowing their over-prepared nature would lead to them bombarding Mike with questions if he didn’t clarify every detail. Both nodded, keeping quiet.

The waitress came back with their drinks, then left again. She’d given waters to Eddie and Richie. Neither complained.

The group of seven happily chatted, talking about school and their home lives. Mike expressed fear in applying to college. He’d taken the necessary tests to qualify, but felt guilty about leaving behind his responsibilities at the farm.

Bill put a hand on Mike’s shoulder, “I know your family will be proud with whatever yuh-you choose to do with your l-life, Mikey.” A smile grew on Mike’s face.

“Thanks, Bill,” he replied softly. Everyone else chimed in with a

similar phrase, encouragement making its way around the table.

Over the course of dinner, Ben, at Richie's left, was fidgeting constantly. He'd hardly touched his food, a small salad.

Richie leaned toward Ben and raised an eyebrow. "Everything alright? You're greener than those cucumbers," He pointed toward the salad's toppings for emphasis.

Ben looked up at Richie and nodded his head. "I'm fine, just thinkin' about stuff is all."

Richie knew he was lying. It was pretty obvious, but Ben wasn't one to lie, so he let it go. He gave a strong pat to Ben's shoulder and offered a smile, then turned back toward his burger.

Bill dropped him and Eddie off.

"Night, see ya!" He hollered, watching Bill drive away, then going inside. His parents were running around the house, clad in formal attire.

"Richie, honey, there you are," His mother came over and reached up to place her hand on his shoulder. "Your father and I have a dinner party this evening, we'll be out late again, sorry sweetie."

Richie shrugged, "It's alright mom, you and dad have fun."

She pressed a kiss to his cheek. "Thank you."

His father stepped out of the laundry room, hair combed into place and suited up, but his tie was still undone and he was barefoot.

"Maggie, my socks still aren't dry," he looked nervous.

"Did you put them on the quick drying cycle?" She responded, mild aggravation in her tone.

His father went back into the laundry room without saying anything else.

“Jus’ put ‘em in the microwave, thas what I’d do, I tell ya!” Richie hollered toward his father, putting on one of his better voices.

He could feel the eyeroll his mother was performing from behind him.

“Mother-dear, would it be alright if I joined the fellas in a get-together day after ‘morrow? Tis all hallows eve, and we would like to celebrate the final harvest in a night of merriment.”

“You may! But only merriment, no shenanigans or funny business.” His father responded, wagging a finger towards Richie. He slipped on a pair of black loafers, then took his wife’s arm.

Richie saluted his father. “Yessir!”

Both his parents smiled, then left.

Notes for the Chapter:

So the outline for this entire fic is finished and I'm working on typing up the next several chapters. Some of my buddies are helping me beta this which im super grateful for! (thanks jules n reese :3)

also it's really fun to implement some of my own music taste into Richie, cause yall know he'd be listening to that grungy shit, which is what my sisters listened to growing up in the 90's and passed onto me. so many Pearl Jam sessions, it made me feel super cool as a four year old with two teenage sisters.

edit: I added in that Richie goes to the library to research what happened to him. Ben helps him find some books.

3. Of Overwhelming Revelations and Infallible Moonlight

Summary for the Chapter:

The moon hovered far above Derry, having reached its peak in this sky. Its full light shone down upon the Earth, the pull impacting everything its light could reach. A boy of only seventeen years was truly feeling its effects for the first time, compelled to chase after the soft light. He ran, his heart leading him toward what he was now forced to crave. To hunt. Feast. Rest.

As he slept, he dreamt of large, gold eyes and hemlock trees. Purple petals, falling into a pool of water. A mirror, shiny and silver, splattered with drops of blood.

Notes for the Chapter:

I changed the outline and had to edit some of the previous chapter but I summarized what I added in the notes. Sorry for the delay, I've been studying for Calc tests and then decided to change stuff around in my outline.

Richie

Alone in his room, he fished out his copy of Nirvana's *In Utero*. Kurt Cobain's voice flooded the house. He slid his socked feet across the hardwood floor and sung his best impression of the grungy crooning.

He reached into his backpack, pulling out his work for the weekend. Several books he didn't recognize were stuffed in the front. A sticky-note was on top of the stack in neat handwriting.

"Richie,

Here's a couple books I found for you. Hope your personal research

goes well!

Ben :)”

Richie smiled to himself. Ben went out of his way to help him with something *just because* they were friends. His heart felt a little bit lighter than it had in awhile, reminding him just how much he was loved by his friends. He’d have to return the favor.

He sifted through the pile, thumbing through the books. They were all pretty similar though, information he was already aware of reemphasized.

The last book didn’t seem very promising, either. It was small, green, and untitled. Instead of a dedication, there was poetic advice.

For those that need a guiding light, follow the moon.

He scoffed, unamused.

The author’s name had been blacked out, which caused some unease to creep into his mind.

With a deep breath, he turned the page.

Chapter 1: Lycanthropy

The Lycan is elusive, only forced into showing its true form once a month. Symptoms of lycanthropy include nausea, dizziness, amnesia, restlessness, fever, heightened senses, enhanced healing and strength, and anger.

Lycanthropy. It sounded familiar.

If you or someone you know is a lycan, do not be afraid. The werewolf half does not change an individual, rather, it taps into something primal within the person for the duration of the full moon.

Werewolves. He adjusted his glasses to make sure he was reading correctly. He stared at the word, willing it to be something else, his mind changing the letters around. It stayed the same, almost mocking

him.

They have enhanced healing and strength, which benefits them in both wolf and human forms. Otherwise they are normal people. The true origin of werewolves is unknown. Many attribute them to the greek myth of Lycaon, who was turned into a wolf by the god Zeus after trying to trick him into consuming human flesh. Others attribute lycanthropy to witchcraft, punishment in the form of a curse. Medieval Europe typically thought of lycans as humans who willingly chose their shape, pledging themselves to satan for the power. The modern world sees the werewolf as a sympathetic creature, a victim. While some embrace the thrill of hunting, most act similarly to wolf packs. They live in family units and teach their young to handle the pull of the moon.

There are no known cures.

What the fuck?

His hands were trembling and the sound of his heart pounding blocked out all sound.

He looked at himself in the mirror, observing the changes his body had gone through in only twenty four hours. Instead of his normally dark brown eyes, bright gold shone in their place.

He started panicking, he couldn't breathe. With the fear and confusion came anger, and with the anger came pain. His limbs felt like jelly and his head began to throb.

The mirror showed a terrifying creature, sharp teeth poked out of his mouth. He yelped at the sight. Knowing what he was looking at was himself didn't diminish his fear.

He felt like a fire had been lit inside of him. His skin itched and his eyes ached. He clawed at his skin, trying to drive away the overwhelming discomfort. He tore off his clothes, his glasses clattering to the floor in his haste. He stumbled back, falling onto his bed.

The sensations only worsened. Everything became too much. Too

loud, too bright, and far too painful. He had to close his eyes. His body began to shake, and shortly after he blacked out.

The moon hovered far above Derry, having reached its peak in this sky. Its full light shone down upon the Earth, the pull impacting everything its light could reach. A boy of only seventeen years was truly feeling its effects for the first time, compelled to chase after the soft light. He ran, his heart leading him toward what he was now forced to crave. To hunt. Feast. Rest.

As he slept, he dreamt of large, gold eyes and hemlock trees. Purple petals, falling into a pool of water. A mirror, shiny and silver, splattered with drops of blood.

October 30th, 1993

When Richie woke, he was shivering. He sat up. He was not in his bedroom. Instead, he was laying on the ground, in the middle of a forest, naked. His stomach growled, and he felt the pain of starvation settle in his gut. His hands were sticky, covered in an all-too-familiar shade of burgundy that he didn't want to think about.

What the fuck? How did I get here? Where are my clothes? His mind raced with questions.

He tried piecing together his memories from the night before.

I got home, I went to my room, I started reading.

The word *Werewolf* hit him abruptly, and he struggled to breathe.

He vaguely remembered panicking before blacking out.

Delicately, he stood up, supporting his weight on the trunk of a large tree. His body felt drained, sluggish. It was like he'd run a marathon. Richie hated running.

He vaguely recognized the patch of forest he was in as part of the barrens, south of the stream and somewhere between the kissing bridge and the Losers' old hideout. Highly aware of his nudity, he stumbled through the underbrush toward the clubhouse. Several minutes later and he'd found the small clearing, free of underbrush.

He searched through the leaves and dirt until he found the hidden entrance. It was slightly warmer inside of the underground room. He quickly searched the belongings stashed throughout the small space.

“Yes!” he croaked, his voice strangely hoarse, the way it would get after a concert or party from yelling. He had found some clothes that belonged to one of his friends, most likely left to dry after a swim in the quarry, but forgotten. They barely fit, the shorts were far too short and the shirt exposed part of his midriff. The socks wouldn’t even go on his feet, so he left them.

He then took the quickest route home, his bare feet and shorts getting him stares from onlookers. It couldn’t be after six, the sky was still dim. He tried his best to focus only on getting home. The front door was unlocked, and he crept into the house. He immediately went to the kitchen, quietly tearing into whatever he could find to satiate his ridiculous stomach. Just as he’d shoved a handful of chips into his mouth, a throat was loudly cleared. He turned toward the source of the sound, and saw his parents. Both appeared very distressed. His mother’s hair was unkempt, and his father had very visible dark circles under his eyes.

“Hi,” Richie tried feigning ignorance.

“Hi?” His mother repeated, voice shrill. “You’ve been gone *all night*, your room is a disaster, and you show up like *that* and all you have to say is *hi*?”

“I’m sorry about-” he was immediately interrupted.

“Whose clothes are you even wearing?” his mother questioned.

“Uh...” He looked down to see what he’d thrown on. “I don’t know?”

Wrong answer.

His mother began to weep. His father spoke.

“Richard, if you aren’t going to take this seriously, then go,” His father’s voice sounded unnatural, not used to a disciplinary tone. “I’m completely appalled by your behavior. We’ll discuss this later.”

Richie gave a curt nod, then went up to his room. His bed was turned over. The posters he'd carefully hung up were torn, deep slashes in his walls. Clothes littered the floor, but most surprisingly, his window was broken. He stooped to the ground, moving things from the floor until he uncovered his glasses. The mess looked far more disastrous with them on. He undressed from the borrowed clothes, wearing his own clean sweatpants and t-shirt. With mild difficulty, he righted his bed, then curled up on the tattered sheets.

What the fuck? He thought. *What the fuck is wrong with me?* He allowed himself to wallow in pity for some time.

When he couldn't bear to listen to himself think anymore, he got up and began to tidy his room. The torn posters were disposed of, crumpled and thrown into the trash. All of his clothes were placed on his bed to be re-sorted and folded.

When examining the window, he stepped on some glass that he hadn't noticed on the floor.

"Shit," he whispered to himself. He hobbled to the bathroom, using tweezers to remove the shards from his sensitive flesh. He ran a washcloth under the faucet and wiped away the excess blood. It took some searching to find a band-aid that would properly fit, but when he went to place it, he couldn't find the wound.

I'm kinda like a superhero. I'm like the fucking Hulk! He grinned, happy to have found some comfort in his predicament.

The phone rang. His mother's voice drifted up from beneath him, and he strained to listen, walking into the hallway.

"Hello? He's not available today." A pause. "I'm sorry. He won't be available tomorrow either." There was a long stretch of silence. "Bill stopped by and told me about your party... ahem, *get-together*. Unless plans change, Richie won't be able to attend. Good-bye, Eddie."

The phone clicked when it was put back on the receiver. *Super grounded*. He thought with mild aggravation. It was comforting to know that his friends were checking up on him though.